

Collaborators, Informers and Agents in Occupied Krakow: A Contribution to Further Research

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This study contributes new research exploring cases of collaboration with the German authorities and the phenomenon of delators (denouncers), informers and agents in occupied Krakow, as well as letters of denunciation. Cases linked to the blackmailing at the beginning of World War II of Jews, and as the war continued of colleagues and neighbours working for the resistance and of disliked relatives and in-laws are also taken into account. Letters written by Krakow inhabitants – some anonymous, others signed – are appraised for information contained therein on political, racial, economic, social and financial matters. The article also describes the activities of the Polish resistance against collaborators and the post-war settling of scores through the Krakow Special Criminal Court in the early post-war years.

Keywords: Collaboration. Informers. Agents. Krakow. Denunciation.

According to estimates made after the war, approximately 800–1000 people collaborated with the Krakow Gestapo during World War II. The historian Leszek Gondek suggests that at the end of the occupation the Gestapo could call on the services of 2000 informants. They came from various social and professional backgrounds, and their contacts with the German authorities were both regular as well as spontaneous, depending above all else on the dynamics of the occupation and the conditions at any given time. Their ranks were mostly made up of Poles and Volksdeutsche, as well as a small group of Ukrainians and Jews – of which there were around 20.¹

The subject of the present analysis is not entirely unknown to researchers; however, the source literature is rather limited. Many papers have been published on the subject of collaboration in occupied Poland,² as well as on the history of Krakow during World War II as a whole.³ On the other hand, no separate study has focused on individual cases of collaboration with the invaders or the phenomenon of delators (denouncers)⁴ in the

1 GONDEK, *Polska karząca 1939–1945*, 114. See: JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*

2 See e.g.: KOTT, *Obrońcy kolaboracjonizmu*, 179–183. SZAROTA, *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni*, 125–137. MADAJCZYK, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*, 256. MADAJCZYK, *Między neutralną współpracą ludności terytoriów okupowanych a kolaboracją z Niemcami*, 181–196. RINGS, *Leben mit dem Feind*. FRIEDRICH, *Problem polskiej kolaboracji*, 46–52. GROSS, *Themes for a Social History*, 24 sqq. GROSS, *Upiorna dekada*, chapter *Upiorna dekada*. STRZEMBOSZ, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna*, 88–123. MADAJCZYK, *Zdrada – współdziałanie – pasywność*, 112–121. MADAJCZYK, *Zdrada i kolaboracja*, 91–103. TAUBER, *'Kollaboration' in Nordosteuropa*.

3 The most important studies on this topic include: CHROBACZYŃSKI, *Postawy, zachowania, nastroje. CHROBACZYŃSKI, Kraków 1939–1945*, 247–254. STRÖDER, *Pokłosie pobytu w Krakowie*, 141–146. SOWA, *Kraków i krakowianie*, 7–13. KULER, *Kraków 1939–45*, 26–40. CHWALBA, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5. CHWALBA, *Kraków w historiografii*, 79. KLUCZEWSKI, *Bez zaciemnienia*. CZOCHER, *W okupowanym Krakowie*.

4 The first and, to date, only attempt to investigate the themes of collaboration and denunciation in occupied Poland, as well as study surviving anonymous denunciations, was undertaken by ENGELKING, *Szanowny panie gestapo*. This problem is also addressed in passing in studies on the history of the Jewish community in occupied Krakow, in the context of denunciations of Jews. The most important publications on denouncers

capital of the General Government.⁵ These problems have yet to be investigated as, to date, they have only been addressed in a few analyses, and even then merely in passing. The most important are those by Józef Bratko,⁶ Anetta Rybacka,⁷ Andrzej Chwałba,⁸ Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk,⁹ Elżbieta Rączy,¹⁰ Ryszard Kotarba,¹¹ Martyna Grądzka-Rejak,¹² Witold Medykowski¹³ and Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec.¹⁴ The abovementioned authors cited specific examples of collaboration, including in the context of relations between Poles and Jews.

The main goal of this paper is not only to describe the activities of individuals (denouncers, informers and agents) who collaborated with the authorities of occupied Krakow, but also to analyse their fates after the war, especially in terms of the way society settled scores with them. Seeing as this is a broad and complex area of research requiring a separate analysis, I shall not focus on the problem of institutionalized collaboration.

The outbreak of World War II and the ruthless policy of the Third Reich towards the residents of occupied territories led not only to the erosion of social ties, but also to the loss of any sense of solidarity. Individuals pursued their own selfish goals, with their sole interest in mind. That sort of behaviour was encouraged by economic and institutional chaos, as well as by the precarious structure of the German rule, consisting of rival agencies, constantly competing with each other. Many people took advantage of those circumstances to settle old scores, for example by denouncing their enemies to the Nazis. This kind of attitude was common in most cities of occupied Europe – for instance, in and around Lyon, France.¹⁵ The situation in Western Europe was, however, different from the situation in Poland during World War II; there, death sentences were delivered without hesitation on a daily basis, by all the parties involved.

The character of occupied Krakow was defined by its multi-layered nature. This nature was due to the marginality of the Polish local government in the city, the “polyphonic” nature of the resistance movement and the structure of the Polish Underground State. Various authorities decided on the direction of the denunciations: citizens of Krakow denounced people not only to the Germans, but also to the PUS. From the point of view of social behaviours, there was little difference between those

are: FITZPATRICK – GELLATELY, *Accusatory Practices*. GELLATELY, *Denunciation as a Subject of Historical Research*, 16–29. WILLIAMS, *Letters of Denunciation*.

5 This subject has been tackled in more depth by researchers of the history of Warsaw and the Warsaw region during World War II. Barbara Engelking has provided particularly valuable insights into the activities of blackmailers and informers: ENGELKING *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień*. Others include: GRABOWSKI, *Ja tego Żyda znam!* PERSON, *Jews accusing Jews*, 225–247, as well as a collective study: ENGELKING – GRABOWSKI, *Dalej jest noc*.

6 BRATKO, *Gestapowcy*. BEDNAREK, *Kraków – czas okupacji 1939–1945*.

7 RYBICKA, *Instytut Niemieckiej Pracy Wschodniej*.

8 CHWAŁBA, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5.

9 MŁYNARCZYK, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą*, 103–132.

10 RĄCZY, *Zagłada Żydów*.

11 KOTARBA, *Niemiecki obóz w Płaszowie*.

12 GRĄDZKA-REJAK, *Kobieta żydowska*.

13 MĘDYKOWSKI, *Przeciw swoim*.

14 JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*

15 See: WILLIAMS, *Letters of Denunciation*, 136–152.

forms of denunciation. In Krakow, this phenomenon was volatile and complex, which I shall attempt to emphasize in the main part of the paper.

Krakow during World War II

In 1939, Krakow had a population of 259,000; two years later, this number had grown to approximately 321,000.¹⁶ Several factors were behind the constant and rapid changes in Krakow's population. First of all, after the city was made the capital of the General Government in October 1939, it began to attract increasing numbers of civil servants (i.e. clerks) and military personnel, along with their families. Furthermore, the city had to cope with a mass influx of refugees from territories annexed to the Third Reich, in particular from the Greater Poland, Pomerania, and Silesia regions, many of them Jews and Ukrainians. Finally, in 1941 two municipalities and 28 rural communities were incorporated into Krakow, thereby establishing "Die Regierung Stadt Krakau".¹⁷ According to the census carried out by the Nazi authorities in the GG in May 1943, Krakow's population was comprised of the following: 251,912 Poles (85.5 %), 20,997 Germans (7.4 %), 8,753 Jews (3 %), 1,947 Ukrainians (0.6 %) and 1,184 representatives of other nations, e.g. Austrians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Latvians, Czechs, Slovaks and Italians (0.4 %), giving a total of 284,793 persons.¹⁸ These estimates are imprecise, as the number of citizens may have reached as high as 319,000¹⁹ or more.

One of Krakow's unique features was that, besides functioning as the capital of the General Government²⁰ and the administrative centre for the Krakow region, where all central-state civil and political institutions were located, it was also divided (in 1942) into three separate urban spaces: the "Aryan" quarter (inhabited by Poles, Germans and others), the Krakow ghetto²¹ and the German camp in Płaszów.²²

16 *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny, 1939*, 152. *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, 8 May 1943, no. 7, p. 3.

17 CHWALBA, *Okupowany Kraków*, 33–37. CHROBACZYŃSKI, *Kraków – „stolica” Generalgouvernement*, 237–238.

18 *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, 1940, no. 7, p. 3.

19 *Goniec Krakowski*, 26 October 1944.

20 General Government – an administrative body established on 26 October 1939 (pursuant to a decree issued by Adolf Hitler on 12 October 1939) in that part of occupied Polish territory which had not been annexed to the Reich.

21 The Krakow ghetto was created in March 1941 by the Nazi authorities in Podgórze district. It covered an area of approx. 20 ha in size and included 320 buildings and houses, in which 15–20,000 Jews were quartered. The final liquidation of the ghetto began on 13 March 1943, when the SS, police and Sonderdienst units drove 6,000 to 8,000 Jews out of the ghetto and transported them to the concentration camp in Płaszów.

22 The German camp in Płaszów functioned between 1942 and 1944, approx. 5 km from Krakow; it covered an area of 80 hectares. Initially, it functioned as a labour camp; later, it was transformed into a concentration camp. At its height it had a prisoner population totaling 30,000 (27,000 Jews and approx. 3,000 Poles).

The authorities of the General Government established their headquarters in Krakow,²³ as did the security services, the public order, district,²⁴ regional and city authorities,²⁵ and many different units of the German police, including its political (Gestapo), security (Sipo), and criminal (Kripo) branches as well as the 'Order' police (Orpo) and Protection police (Schupo).²⁶ The Germans occupied the headquarters of the city's most important offices as well as those of its social and economic institutions, including the General Directorate for Eastern Railways, the German Postal Service in the East, and the Central Welfare Council. Jan Dąbrowski recalled:

Krakow was swarming with Germans, both in uniform and civilian clothes, yelling and shouting, and acting more and more brutally towards the Polish citizens [...]. Impoverished refugees who returned to the city after many months of wandering often found their homes had been robbed by the Germans.²⁷

National policies constituted an important part of Nazi occupation policy in Poland during World War II. The German authorities made every effort to deepen the divide between ethnic groups and antagonize the different communities that made up Polish society at the time. Krakow became one of the most important links in the chain of the Nazi German system of organized oppression. Two mutually hostile subsystems came to life inside this system: that of the invaders, and that of the citizens of the occupied territory. Over the years, relations between those contrasting worlds evolved, depending on various factors – but they remained hostile nonetheless; they were also strongly dependent on processes taking place inside those subsystems.²⁸

The relationship between the local population and the Nazi authorities, especially in terms of collaboration in the first months of the war, was shaped by the tradition and the history of the city (the outcome of relations between the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia, and the attitudes of Krakow's 'intelligentsia'),²⁹ which had been brutally and viciously dismantled by the occupiers. The German occupation changed, rather radically, the city's ancient social fabric, violating many long-established values and

23 From April 1941, the GG government was headed by the state secretary who oversaw 12 main departments: internal affairs (in German: Hauptabteilung Innere Verwaltung), the treasury (Hauptabteilung Finanzen), justice (Hauptabteilung Justiz), economy (Hauptabteilung Wirtschaft), food (Hauptabteilung Ernährung und Landwirtschaft), forests (Hauptabteilung Forsten), labour (Hauptabteilung Arbeit), propaganda (Hauptabteilung Propaganda), science and education (Hauptabteilung Wissenschaft und Unterricht), construction (Hauptabteilung Bauwesen), railways (Hauptabteilung Eisenbahn) and post (Hauptabteilung Post). See: Administrative Regulation no. 1 of 7 April 1941 to the 3rd Regulation on the Reconstruction of the Administration of the General Government (Organization of the General Governor's Government) of 16 March 1941. In: WEH, *Prawo Generalnego Gubernatorstwa*, A122a.

24 Krakow was administered by the following governors: Otto Wächter (November 1939 to 12 January 1942), Richard Wendler (31 January 1942 to 26 May 1943), Ludwig Losacker (26 May to 10 October 1943), Kurt Ludwig von Burgsdorff (1 December 1943 to January 1945).

25 The regional governors of Krakow during the occupation were as follows: Ernst Zörner (September 1939 to February 1940), Carl Schmidt (February 1940 to March 1941), Rudolf Pavlu (April 1941 to April 1943) and Josef Kramer (April 1943 to January 1945).

26 On the structure of the GG Government, the RSHA etc., see: MACZYŃSKI, *Organizacyjno-prawne aspekty*, 467–482. For more on this subject, see: MADAJCZYK, *Polityka III Rzeszy w okupowanej Polsce*. MADAJCZYK, *Generalna Gubernia w planach hitlerowskich*.

27 DĄBROWSKI, *Rządy niemieckie w Krakowie*, 14. See also: BEDNAREK – ZIMMERER, *Okupanci*.

28 CHROBACZYŃSKI, *Kraków 1939–1945*.

29 BIENIARZÓWNA – MAŁECKI, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 3.

standards. It also changed the mentality of society, disrupting citizens' sense of stability and security.

Many underground newspapers in circulation in occupied Krakow published articles focusing on the need for effective resistance against the Nazis while at the same time promoting what it deemed appropriate moral stances among citizens. The main features of the "civil struggle" against the Germans included the following:

1. Maintaining the fighting spirit and moral stances worthy of the Polish Nation;
2. Counteracting the destruction of humanity resulting from Nazi doctrine;
3. Preventing the plunder and theft of the nation's cultural and material assets;
4. Spreading word abroad that the fight continues in Poland;
5. Forcing the invaders to maintain a large military presence inside Polish borders so as to weaken their forces elsewhere;
6. Refusing under any circumstances to weaken the will resist.³⁰

However, the terror of the occupation led citizens in Krakow to react in different, often extreme ways, from passive and active resistance through to submission, and even to collaboration with the Nazi authorities.³¹ These actions destabilized the fabric of society (through fear, uncertainty, the threat of arrest, imprisonment or execution). People feared for their own lives and the lives of their families, and mistrusted their neighbours – and the underground press fuelled this sense of terror and foreboding, warning readers about the presence of agents and informers, and publishing the names of individuals suspected of committing acts of high treason. Gossips, busybodies, newsmongers, denouncers and snitches were reviled and stigmatized. The last two named groups comprised both people who openly or anonymously denounced others to the Germans, and intelligence agents or persons who (occasionally or regularly) cooperated with them, thereby becoming instruments of terror at the hands of the invaders.

Agents and individual collaborators in occupied Krakow³²

During the occupation collaborators working for the German authorities in Poland, and in particular for the Nazi security apparatus, fell into various categories. The Gestapo initially divided its agents into two groups based on formal criteria: *Werk-Personen* (W-Personen) and *Vertrauens-Personen* (V-Personen). In 1943, two more categories were introduced: *Auskunfts-Personen* (A-Personen) and *Gewährs-Personen* (G-Personen), whereas Orpo agents were called *Zuträger-Personen* (Z-Personen), as they ran their own informer networks. However, the broadest category is that used by the author of the present study, namely informers of security services in the occupied territory, which comprised the following groups:

1. V-Leute – most trusted agents, members of the NSDAP,
2. Agenten – agents who were not members of the NSDAP,
3. Zubringer – regular informers, such as doctors, members of the clergy etc.,

30 CHROBACZYŃSKI, *Postawy, zachowania, nastroje*, 100.

31 See: CHROBACZYŃSKI, *Postawy, zachowania, nastroje*, 100.

32 The present author first analysed this problem in her work entitled *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?* This study deepens the analysis as a part of research under a grant of the National Center of Science (SONATINA 2). The author is currently working on a project entitled *Zjawisko donosicielstwa w powiecie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945* [Phenomenon of collaboration in the Krakow district, 1939–1945] (project no. 2018/28/C/H53/00108).

4. Helfershelfer (H-Leute) – occasional informers, and
5. Unzuverlässige (U-Leute) – criminals and corrupt individuals, occasionally used by the SD.³³

The main aim of this study is to describe the activities of the last three groups of informers and denouncers: occasional and regular collaborators of the Krakow Gestapo. It was they who usually provided the occupying authorities with vital information concerning members of communities with which they were in contact every day. They functioned in their social environments and gathered information concerning their neighbours, relatives, families and colleagues. Envy, jealousy, revenge, score-settling, fear of repression, economic competition and family quarrels were the most common factors motivating individuals to denounce their neighbours and begin collaborating with the German authorities and police.³⁴

In my research, I use terminology that was adopted during World War II, with a few exceptions. In this study, "agents" are synonymous with "informers" and "confidants", i.e. persons regularly or occasionally in contact with the Gestapo. "Denouncers", on the other hand, are synonymous with "snitches", i.e. persons who reported to the Gestapo sporadically or had a one-off interaction with the authorities. The "services" of the latter grouping were employed as a weapon against a particular community, and their main motive was personal gain, to the detriment of other people, which often resulted from the fact that these individuals had no other means of subsistence for their families, or simply treated "snitching" as a mode of survival.

Another incentive for contacting the security apparatus was the remuneration that informers could expect to receive – in cash or in kind (vodka, cigarettes, clothes, sugar etc.); they could also count on the authorities' help in overcoming "red tape" regarding their economic activities. Moreover, any information deemed useful by the authorities could be given in exchange for an individual's exemption from forced labour in the Third Reich.

There were also those who chose to barter their freedom for collaboration with the Germans.³⁵ Reportedly, a relatively large number of occasional agents were willing to do so. According to Borodziej, in Tomaszów province, for example, the military police was itself served by two to eight informers.³⁶ The number of German collaborators based in the Krakow region remains unknown; however, the archives of the Krakow district of the home army provide us with the names of more than 500 informers.³⁷ Kazimierz Albin, a member of the Krakow underground, recalled after the war:

Krakow was unlike other cities. Many civilians, along with countless Germans, an exceptionally large garrison of soldiers and police, and a spider's web of agents and confidants made any combat mission in the city almost impossible.³⁸

33 BIERNACKI, *Okupant a polski ruch oporu*, 71. For a classification of different types of agents, see: ARONSON, *Reinhard Heydrich und die Frühgeschichte*, 155.

34 For more on denunciations and reports made by the local population to the German authorities in occupied Poland, see: ENGELKING, *Szanowny Panie gestapo*. GONDEK, *Polska karząca 1939–1945*, 100.

35 See e.g.: *Dziennik Polski*, 1943, no. 613, p. 4. *Małopolska Agencja Prasowa*, 1943, no. 11, p. 12.

36 BORODZIEJ, *Terror i polityka*, 89.

37 MOSKALIŁ, *Zbrodniarz*, 82.

38 ALBIN, *List gończy*, 146.

Regular agents of the security apparatus were individuals who maintained regular contact with the Nazi authorities and who decided to cooperate with them on a permanent basis. These confidants were given new identities, apartments and jobs. Usually, they reported to their "guardians", i.e. German police officers who met them in public places or private homes. Borodziej claimed that the average monthly remuneration of such agents amounted to 100–200 marks, plus bonuses and additional compensation "in kind". Effective cooperation often resulted in, among other things, the informer's relatives being released from German prisons or concentration camps. An agent's principal task was to infiltrate the Polish underground, even at the lowest levels. The security police recruited professional agents from among active members of the resistance. Agents were selected based on their past activities and their role in the underground.

Professional agents were the most valuable source of information for the security police. Their anonymity was particularly guarded, and details of their cooperation were kept in different places for safety purposes. These agents declared their willingness to collaborate with the authorities in writing. The security police assigned them a coded number, and subsequently acquainted them with the area they were supposed to cover. Informers for the security apparatus often used the help of the Volksdeutsche, who recruited snitches and agents among Poles.³⁹ They reported on the prevailing moods of the local population, and often provoked individuals into expressing their views on the occupation and the authorities, and the data gathered in this way was registered by security police functionaries.⁴⁰

In addition to sounding out the attitudes of their fellow Poles occasional denouncers primarily informed the Germans (willingly) of Jews residing illegally in the city.⁴¹ As Barbara Engelking rightly observed, agents became, in a way, cogs in the terror machine and an integral part of the system the Gestapo relied upon – especially by sending letters of denunciation that supported German authorities not for money, but out of sheer cynicism.⁴² The unpaid "snoops" of the security services deliberately stoked up fears of repression among the local population, and reinforced the conviction that the occupier was omnipotent and omnipresent in their everyday lives. These snoops were, undoubtedly, as much of a threat to Polish people and the Polish underground as "professional" or "paid" German agents. Anonymous letters sent to the Gestapo provide insights into political, economic, social and "racial" (i.e. in accordance with the provisions of the Nuremberg Laws) lives of Krakow citizens. In addition to reports informing the authorities of failures to comply with German regulations, activities of the underground and crimes committed by Jews (e.g. smuggling or illegal presence outside the ghetto), delators also sent in anonymous tip-offs against personal enemies.

Informers and denouncers in occupied Krakow

During the war, officers of the Krakow Gestapo had at their disposal a large number of denouncers and several intelligence networks comprising 10–20 agents. At the end of the occupation, the Krakow Gestapo reportedly had approximately 2000 informers

39 BORODZIEJ, *Terror i polityka*, 86.

40 RAMME, *Stuzba Bezpieczenstwa SS*, 194–195.

41 FITZPATRICK – GELLATELY, *Accusatory Practices*, 1.

42 ENGELKING, *Szanowny panie gistapo*, 17.

on their books.⁴³ Kurt Heinemeyer,⁴⁴ a functionary of the Krakow Gestapo, testified after the war that "in mid-1940 he was ordered to examine every detainee to assess their usefulness as potential informers".⁴⁵ His first agent was a Pole, Karol Pfeiffer, who, during an operation against the Polish resistance at the beginning of the occupation, allegedly helped Heinemeyer gather intelligence on political organizations such as the Polish Socialist Party, the People's Party and the National Radical Camp.⁴⁶ Records show that the Kwast brothers, Gustaw and Maks, also regularly reported to the Nazis.⁴⁷ In 1939, they signed the Volkslist and volunteered for service as translators at the KdS Krakow. Because of their place of residence, they knew the local environment and customs, as well as their "way around" the area.⁴⁸

The 3rd and 4th departments of the KdS also oversaw an extensive network of agents, informers and residents.⁴⁹ Their activities were mainly directed against Polish underground organizations. The scope of the responsibilities of these people depended on the department to which German functionaries belonged. Before the informer networks were reorganized in 1942,⁵⁰ Gestapo collaborators' personal files were held in Referat [Department] IV-N, which was supposed to manage and supervise the work of the informers and assign them missions. In reality, the SD and the Gestapo ran partially separate networks. The SD managed to retain only a certain number of informers, whereas the Gestapo, thanks to financial support from the Referat, was able to expand its intelligence group significantly.⁵¹

Heads of departments and subdivisions of the Krakow Gestapo had their own informers and agents: Adolf Spilker, Albert Schulz, Heinrich Hamann, Paul Emil Groner,

43 GONDEK, *Polska karzacja 1939–1945*, 114.

44 SS-Obersturmführer Kurt Heinrich August Dietrich Heinemeyer – born in Hannover on 27 December 1907; from 1940, a functionary of KdS Krakow; between 1943 and 1945, he was head of the Podreferat [subdivision] IV-A-1 responsible for fighting against Polish left-wing organizations. He was handed over to the Polish justice system in 1947.

45 Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [AIPN Kr], sign. 502/2246, Kurt Heinemeyer criminal case file, p. 130.

46 AIPN Kr, sign. 502/2246, Kurt Heinemeyer criminal case file, pp. 130–131.

47 Maks Kwast was born on 15 August 1909 in Łódź; he moved to Krakow before the outbreak of WWII. On 13 January 1939, he volunteered to work for the Gestapo. He was employed as a translator for the political police in the Jewish Department. His supervisor in his first weeks was Oskar Brandt; later, he was assigned to a group managed by Becher, in which, according to Kwast, he worked as an auxiliary police officer until May 1941. In May 1941, Kurt Heinemeyer became his supervisor; Kwast claimed Heinemeyer had appointed him criminal secretary. However, Heinemeyer did not mention any such promotion in his testimony. It is more likely that Kwast continued to work as a translator for the Gestapo, and remained a salaried member of staff in that department, located on Pomorska street, until the end of the occupation. He was sentenced to death after the war and executed on 18 August 1948. AIPN Kr, sign. 010/3900, Maks Kwast case file; AIPN Kr, sign. 425/302, prisoner file: Kwast Maks.

48 AIPN Kr, sign. 010/3900, Maks Kwast case file; AIPN Kr, sign. 425/302, prisoner file: Kwast Maks, p. 11.

49 KdS – German Office of the Commandant of the Security Police and the Security Services for the Krakow District.

50 The overhaul was a result of organizational changes in the RSHA in 1942 and a renumbering of departments. It was also in response to large-scale operations launched by the security services against the Polish underground. See: STRZEMBOSZ, *Akcje zbrojne podziemnej Warszawy*, 115–116. In 1943, more than a thousand agents and informers of the German security services located in the GG were eliminated. See: GONDEK, *W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej*, 138.

51 BIERNACKI, *Okupant a polski ruch oporu*, 73. Information regarding goings-on in the city was also gathered by "field agents" of the Orpo, the military police, administration, and the military. Furthermore, the "blue uniforms" had their own informers. See: PIETRZYKOWSKI, *Hitlerowcy w Częstochowie*, 107.

Kurt Heinemeyer, Rudolf Körner, Erich Vollbrecht, Kurt Thomsen, Wilhelm Raschwitz, Erich Mittman, Paul Siebert, Oskar Brandt, Wilhelm Kunde, Heinrich Mayer, Friedrich Popping, Otto von Malotki, Herman Hische, Otto Gundlach, Herman Hische, Edward Fischer, Edgar Schultz and Robert Weissman;⁵² their job was to monitor the local population based on strict criteria.

Many occasional snitches who collaborated with the Nazi collaborators had a poor reputation for trustworthiness – they included a certain number of pathological liars, mythomaniacs and swindlers, and only a handful were reliable agents. The Gestapo were, in a way, resigned to relying on their own regular informers for help. As Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul have concluded, “without an army of volunteer informers, the Gestapo would have been forced to operate blindly”.⁵³ Those who do not agree with this theory claim that the Gestapo used reports from private parties; but, on the other hand, they argued that there existed an entire web of German institutions whose mission was to surveil society and facilitate the work of the Gestapo. German researchers also claim that approximately 70 % of trials held in courts were based on anonymous letters sent to the Gestapo.⁵⁴ In the case of the Krakow Gestapo it is impossible to draw such clear conclusions based on what remains of its archives. Of the approximately 2500 cases investigated by the district court in Krakow during the war only 264 case files have survived. Of these, the prosecutor initiated proceedings based on 5 anonymous letters and more than 30 reports submitted by denouncers.⁵⁵ In several cases, individuals making false accusations in such reports were themselves convicted.

The Krakow underground intercepted several hundred anonymous or signed letters written by inhabitants of Krakow and the surrounding areas and sent to the police or the occupying authorities containing information on political, racial, economic, social or financial matters. The examples of denunciations that I was able to obtain and use as reference in the paper are insufficient to recreate the so-called “denouncer profile”⁵⁶ or to approach the problem statistically, dividing that group according to their social/professional affiliation, education, sex, patriotic sentiments or lack thereof. It is, undoubtedly, a subject that should be treated and discussed separately. For the purposes of this paper, I shall present the dominant aspects of the denunciations I have managed to study, along with their characteristic features. They were usually handwritten; several were typewritten – the latter were longer and more detailed. Only in several cases is it justified to suspect that the authors of those denunciations had – or did not have – elementary or higher education. Some conclusions might be drawn based on the vocabulary, grammatical or spelling correctness, overall coherency of the text, and the authors’ ability to convey information. I am thinking particularly of denunciations written on postcards – some of them were logical, others chaotic. Subjects tackled by authors were either thematically related or completely devoid of sense. Some denunciations were written with a pen, others with a pencil. Some were

52 JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*, 248–250.

53 MALLMANN – GERHARD, *Herrschaft und Alltag*, 158.

54 MALLMANN – GERHARD, *Herrschaft und Alltag*, 158.

55 JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Criminal Cases*.

56 The analysis of that problem demands separate research. Due to the limited length of the paper and the fact that it is only loosely related to the main subject, I shall present only the most important conclusions from my research to date.

very neat, others very sloppy. Some authors took care to retain the structure of a formal letter, dividing the text into the usual "introduction – main body – conclusion pattern", providing their contact details (!) and using terms of respect: "Yours sincerely", "Best wishes" etc. Understanding the intentions of other denouncers demanded, however, a lot of concentration, and in some cases, imagination. Sentences were short and incoherent. Most of them were written on postcards, with big, capital letters and large spacing between lines.

Denunciations were addressed both to the police authorities (Gestapo, Polish police, criminal police) and to the administration (e.g. the housing executive). One of the addressees of those letters was the aforementioned Hans Frank, the general governor. Documents were written mostly in German, less often in Polish, even though Polish citizens' knowledge of the former language was usually poor. It is hard to say, at this stage of my research, if the addressees' motivations – most of them social – were more prone to use "legality" or "patriotism" as an excuse for their actions. The latter category especially was absent in the documents I have studied; the most common reason was dislike towards the targeted person. Less frequently, the reason was economic or anti-Semitic. The subjects tackled in the denunciations, however, corresponded with the dynamically changing situation in the country. For instance, from 1942, the number of denunciations targeting Jews increased; even before that, prior to creation of the ghetto, the opportunistic public frowned upon Jewish families occupying houses in Polish and German residential quarters. New tenants were treated with mistrust and suspected of illegal activities or collaboration with the Nazis; they were seen as a threat to the status quo. In 1944, denunciations related to finance started appearing – authors informed on frauds and their illegal businesses. It should be noted, however, that the dramatic increase in the number of denunciations was purely social in nature and was not particularly sought after by the German authorities due to their insignificance. This was often confirmed by the denouncers themselves, who wrote letters to the Gestapo complaining of lack of reaction to their previous offense reports.⁵⁷

Denouncers communicated with the Nazi administration in both Polish and German (in writing or in person at the police station). When contacting the Kripo or the Polish police (PP), informers used Polish. Most policemen had served in the national police before the war; however, few of them were stationed in Krakow at the time. Those who took part in investigations supervised by the prosecutor were not originally from the city, but came from neighbouring provinces: Bochnia or Miechów. Franciszek Kózka served in the PP in Chrzanów,⁵⁸ while Jan Błoński was employed in an automobile repair workshop in Lviv.⁵⁹ Stanisław Turski "Wojtek" was born in Krakow and worked as an intelligence agent for the Polish police in Krakow, while at the same time cooperating with the ZWZ/AK [Union of Armed Struggle/Home Army – from 1943 he was a member of the 'Prostokąt' ['Rectangle'] unit).⁶⁰

57 I shall analyse those problems in more detail in a book that I have recently been working on, dedicated in particular to the phenomenon of denouncing in the occupied Krakow, as part of the aforementioned research grant.

58 AIPN Kr, sign. 502/527, Franciszek Kózka case file.

59 Both of them were accused of treason but acquitted after the war. At the time, they lived at the same house on P. Popielea Street (no. 12).

60 AIPN Kr, sign. 502/ GK 164/380, vol. 1, p. 82, case file: Nordmann Ewald vel. Nordynski.

The police mostly intervened in political and racial matters, many of which were merely an excuse to settle scores with neighbours. That was the case with Józef Korajda, accused not only of illicit trading in pigs, but also of the unlawful possession of a firearm. However, the real reason was different – one of the inhabitants of Luboszyca wanted revenge on his neighbour who had been terrorizing the locals.⁶¹ An analysis of the remaining documents shows that other denunciations were less interesting to the police. It took three anonymous letters to persuade them to take an interest in the illegal practices of Marian Sikora, who worked at the tobacco production plant. An investigation failed to produce any evidence of illicit practices.⁶²

Denouncers and occasional agents were, as I have already mentioned, rewarded for their work – in cash or in kind, i.e. they were given food, vodka, cigarettes, clothes, underwear or textiles by their German supervisors. According to Kwast, a translator for the Gestapo, confidants did not receive recompense for their work: “they were given things only when they’d done something useful. If it was something big, they earned more; if it was something less significant, they earned less for it”.⁶³ Among those who did not seek compensation were delators: their contact with German authorities was regular, one-off or spontaneous; they acted either overtly or covertly. They wrote reports or appeared at police stations, informing the authorities of any violations in occupation law committed by their neighbours. Their actions were often motivated simply by personal grudges and only some of them treated it as a source of profit, often through the blackmailing of Jews hiding from persecution.⁶⁴

Informers came from various social groups, among them members of the liberal professions (e.g. businessmen, clerks, teachers, academic teachers, farmers), former policemen and soldiers, as well as petty criminals and members of the ZWZ/AK underground. However, Sławomir Buryła, literary scholar also observed that “a significant number of those people were poorly educated”.⁶⁵ Understandably, the war gave rise to a new class of people who specialized in informing on Jews and people who failed to comply with the occupation law as well as on members of the resistance. Their motives were always the same: money, personal conflicts originating from before the war, fear or anti-Semitism.

While informers and denouncers posed a threat to inhabitants of the Krakow ghetto and Płaszów concentration camp, their actions could have even deadlier consequences for those Jews still hiding on the “Aryan side”. Jews seeking refuge in bunkers in the ghetto (after its liquidation) in 1943 were sometimes denounced not only by Poles who made a living out of seeking out the hiding places of Jews in the city and surrounding areas,⁶⁶ but also by their own co-religionists, which was especially painful.⁶⁷ The latter

61 Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [ANKr], sign. 29/1988/2124, Marian Sikora case file.

62 ANKr, sign. 29/1988/2124, Marian Sikora case file.

63 AIPN Kr, sign. 010/3900, Maks Kwast case file, p. 43.

64 See: ENGELKING, *Szanowny panie gestapo*.

65 BURYŁA, *Wokół Zagłady*, 122.

66 The search for Jews in and around Krakow was also conducted by a special task force of the German police (known as the Jagdkommando), composed of regular police and MP functionaries, created on 2 February 1943. Its main mission was to find and kill Jews who had gone to ground. See: AIPN Kr, sign. 1/857, J. Buszko, R. Kotarba, *Działalność represyjna okupanta wobec ludności polskiej za pomoc udzielaną Żydom (w rejonie krakowskim)*, p. 5.

67 This was at a time period during which the Nazi authorities were liquidating all the ghettos in the region, seeking out Jews trying to avoid arrest or deportation. The Krakow ghetto ceased to function on 13 March 1943. Mojżesz Brodman and Szymon Szpic were among those Jews who collaborated with the Germans, along with

group, however, were not very numerous;⁶⁸ their actions were motivated by other reasons. They also faced moral dilemmas. This fact should always be borne in mind when analysing this phenomenon. Polish police functionaries were also engaged in hunting down Jewish fugitives.⁶⁹

Some confidants and informers "specialized" in denouncing Jews living incognito on the "Aryan side", which I shall mention only briefly in order to outline the problem. They were denounced not only by their neighbours and agents, but also by their friends and relatives. In October 1939, the German authorities seized possession of Henryk Stecki's medical practice after he had been accused of being a Jew. The informant was Stecki's colleague who had known him before the war.⁷⁰ The Polish Underground State started to condemn these actions in the fourth year of the war, which I shall discuss in more detail later. Many Jews from Krakow concealing their identities were blackmailed, and the blackmailers threatened to report them to the Germans. This was the reason why Anna Landermann was forced to move from place to place so as to avoid arrest.⁷¹ The Garus family, who began using fake IDs in 1940, were less fortunate. In 1943, Jan and his daughter, Maria, were arrested after they were reported to the Krakow gestapo by Jan's second wife, who subsequently took over her husband's fortune. Jan Garus did not survive the occupation; his daughter returned to Krakow after the war and took Wanda Garus to court.⁷² In 1945, Mr Goldfinger testified before the Jewish Historical Commission:

After the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto and other cities, a great number of Jews and children took shelter in other quarters and in the neighbouring villages. Most of them were caught by agents and the "blue uniforms"; the detainees were kept in bunkers on Pomorska street without air, food or water; they were beaten; they kept them there for a few days, and then they were taken, half-dead,

a few Jewish policemen. However, members of the Jewish Order Services were often confused with denouncers. Aaron Geldwerk mentioned the search for Jews hiding in the former ghetto area; in his testimony, given after the war, he recalls: 'During the liquidation of the ghetto on 13 March 1943, I hid with my wife and my three children, along with 110 other people, in the attic of one of the houses abandoned during the relocation. Our hiding place was bricked up and concealed; we had a water supply, toilets, and reserves of food. The bunker was approx. 30 m long and 12 m wide. Odeman Brodman's brother-in-law was hiding with us; Brodman came for him on the following day and promised that he would rescue all of us. We felt, however, that we were already doomed, as we were fairly certain that Brodman would report us. And we were right: Kunde came looking for us the next morning and when we saw him through a concealed window, we knew we had been betrayed. Kunde kept looking, knocking on walls; we knew he had been told exactly where to look, because he approached the correct wall, where the exit was very thoroughly masked with old bricks and lime, and he kept calling: »Juden, öffnet, er wird euch nischt geschehen, ich in auch Jude«. [...] On the following day, Kunde came with an entire OD unit led by Brodman. [...] We were taken to the OD station. When we walked down the stairs, my son, Salomon, who was 20 at the time, saw Brodman and said that his fate would be far worse than ours, that God would punish him for it. We knew that around 100 people from the bunker had been arrested on the previous day and shot on the spot'. Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [AŻIH], sign. 301/3366, pp. 1–2.

68 Most importantly, we should be aware of the actual scale of Jewish collaboration in occupied Krakow. Of the 800–1000 Nazi collaborators only 20 were Jewish. See: JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wymuszona współpraca czy zdrada?*

69 See: FRYDEL, *Ordinary Men?*, 68–125.

70 AŻIH, sign. 301/445, an account by Henryk Stecki.

71 AŻIH, sign. 301/622, an account by Anna Landermann.

72 AIPN Kr, sign. 502/510, Maria Garus criminal case file, pp. 72–120.

to Montelupich, where they were beaten all over again; every day, the corpses of a few murdered Jews were transported out of the prison.⁷³

Informers in Płaszów usually tipped off the commandants of illegal smuggling, planned escapes or hidden valuables. Most of them, with a few exceptions, remained anonymous or were merely mentioned by their last name, according to surviving records from the occupation. The information we have on them mostly comes from reports written by underground organizations and the "Żegota" Council to Aid Jews from 1943 and 1944. On 16 December 1943 the latter organization noted the death of 40 people murdered in Płaszów, i.e. Jewish policemen and informers who had become liabilities.⁷⁴ A separate issue concerned rumours that circulated in the camp regarding individuals often seen in the company of the most eager prisoner functionaries or camp personnel.⁷⁵

Those reports, made either in writing or personally, initiated specific procedures based on legal and administrative regulations. They usually began with a notification sent to a police station or an application register and were followed by an analysis of its contents. Subsequently, the notification was referred to the relevant police unit working in conjunction with its Polish or German counterpart (Polish police, Kripo⁷⁶ and Gestapo, especially); a case-handling functionary was appointed and an investigation was launched, which was then referred to the state authorities; the prosecutor's office initiated criminal procedures, and the case was brought to trial and concluded with a final verdict. Between 1939 and 1944, several hundred cases were referred to Krakow's district and municipal courts by police units; many of them based on anonymous and signed denunciations. These were addressed to the Gestapo, Kripo, the Polish police, security police, the governor's office, the directorate of German police, the public security division, the military police or even Hans Frank, the general governor himself.

The number of denunciations was relatively high in occupied Poland; post office employees working for Polish underground organizations managed to intercept some of them.⁷⁷ In 1942 one of the cells of the "Skala" Independent Guerilla Battalion in Krakow was responsible for intercepting denunciations addressed to the Gestapo; it was led by Józef Baster, a.k.a. "Rak",⁷⁸ and it succeeded in "confiscating thousands of anonymous letters".⁷⁹ The counterintelligence unit overseeing the area covered by the main post office in the capital of the GG, where anonymous denunciations were intercepted, was

73 AŻIH, sign. 301/574, an account by Mr Goldfinger.

74 AŻIH, sign. 136, *Varia z okresu okupacji 1939–1945* [Miscellanea from the occupation], a report by the Council to Aid Jews of 31 December 1943, p. 3.

75 For more on this subject, see: JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Wybrane formy kolaboracji w obozie Płaszów*.

76 In Poland, before World War II, the criminal police, known as the *Stuzba Śledcza* ("Investigation Bureau"), was part of the state police (PP). At the end of October 1939, however, it was separated from the PP and incorporated into the German Kriminalpolizei (Kripo), where it was referred to as *Polnische Kriminalpolizei*, i.e. the criminal police (PPK). Thus, PPK officers became part of the *iSicherheitspolizei* (Sipo; security police). On the other hand, the Polish police of the General Government (the so-called navy blue one) was subordinate to the command of the order police (*Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei*; KdO).

77 See: MADOŃ, *Pracownicy Poczty i Telekomunikacji*.

78 The cell was created at the end of 1939 under the aegis of the "Orzeł Biały" [White Eagle] organization. During WWII, it continued to function under the supervision of the Krakow "Kedyw" Diversion Directorate. Its main goal was to intercept letters addressed to the Nazi authorities in which the sender's details remained empty. Particular attention was also paid to the sender's handwriting.

79 Based on an interview with Janusz Baster, Józef Baster's son (5 February 2016).

headed by Stefan Faber, a.k.a. "Stefan", who supervised one of Baster's cells.⁸⁰ One file that has survived contains 250 reports to the German authorities from the years 1940 and 1941, mostly concerning Warsaw and other towns (e.g. Otwock, Pruszków, Grójec, Lublin, Radom, Łódź and Biała Podlaska).⁸¹ Most of these denunciations were written by Poles, but some also came from Volksdeutsche and Jews. Their authors had a variety of professional backgrounds and represented various social groups and classes. This type of activity qualifies, without a doubt, as collaboration.⁸² This was also the case with reports sent by Krakow citizens; however, they were harder to identify, mainly because most of them were written in German.

Activities of the Polish resistance

Underground organizations, such as the Secret Military Organization of the Krakow Garrison, which was incorporated into the Union of Armed Struggle, and later into the Home Army, were responsible for exposing and eliminating collaborators with the Gestapo. A civil resistance division was established towards the end of 1941. In 1942 articles condemning "snitches" began to appear in the underground press, a trend that coincided with the establishment of the courts of Krakow's District Government Delegation for Poland. Two years earlier, lists of Volksdeutsche were published; Poles acting to the detriment of the nation, e.g. working in or for German institutions, subscribing to the newspaper *Goniec Krakowski*, using the German names of streets and squares in their letters or "acting friendly towards the Germans" – were all put on a black list. In the third year of the war, the press warned of the threat posed by Poles returning to Krakow from POW camps, and published their personal details. As stated in one of the issues of *Goniec Krakowski*: "We do not want to condemn those gentlemen preemptively; however – as we are fairly sure of the credibility of this information – we would like to warn our citizens to steer clear of them".⁸³ The reasons for which the underground press warned citizens to be wary of these people are unknown, but they were probably suspected of acts of espionage.

A list of individuals accused of possible collaboration and of denouncing their fellow citizens was published in 1943. From that year onwards, the "Żelbet" group stepped up their intelligence operations under the auspices of the Home Army.⁸⁴ Members of the "Alicja" platoon⁸⁵ and the 'B' II unit of the Krakow Home Army, whose files covered five divisions, also took it upon themselves to expose Nazi informers. The diversion and sabotage groups were composed of around 20 soldiers, which in turn were divided into patrols numbering five or six individuals. The activities of the intelligence and

80 DĄBROWA-KOSTKA, *W okupowanym Krakowie*, 43–44.

81 ENGELKING, *Szanowny panie gestapo*, 5.

82 ENGELKING, *Szanowny panie gestapo*, 5.

83 *Goniec Krakowski*, 1941.

84 J. Proficz, *Hasło 'Jemioła'*. 'Sowiniec' Archiwum Dokumentacji Czynu Niepodległościowego [Archives of the Documenting Acts for Independence], sign. 364b; *ibid.*, sign. 80 Adam Żuława aka 'Gotąb'. *Walki oddziału partyzanckiego 'Żelbet I'*; *ibid.*, sign. 382, *wspomnienia Karola Łysogórskiego aka 'Gzymśik'*; *ibid.*, sign. 78 a, *wspomnienia dowódcy Oddziału Partyzanckiego 'Żelbet': Kraków z walk stoczonych przez Oddział z Niemcami w 1944 r.*

85 See: SKROBECKI, *Podgórski pluton dywersyjny 'Alicja' Szarych Szeregów w Krakowie*.

counterintelligence were supervised at the time by Stanisław "Sprężyna" Czapkiewicz, who drew up a list of agents and confidants suspected of working for the Gestapo.⁸⁶

On 15 July 1943, the Directorate of Underground Resistance was established. Considering the fact that the first reports on informers date back to the first years of the war, the resistance's response was somewhat belated.⁸⁷ Reports compiled by the resistance, partially preserved in Polish archives, were written in 1943. They contain brief details on individuals whose actions were being monitored (first and last name, charges, address) or detailed reports on reconnaissance operations in a suspect's place of residence; in some cases, testimonies of witnesses were collected. The final result of the diversionary unit's efforts was a list of names of agents, partially published in the "Małopolski Biuletyn Informacyjny" [Newsletter of the Lesser Poland Region] or the "Małopolska Agencja Prasowa" [Lesser Poland Region Press Agency], together with the following verdicts: public condemnation reprimand or death, which I shall discuss in more detail in the following sections. Another matter concerned the resistance movement's failed operations, for example, unsuccessful attempts to liquidate informers or innocent people being accused of collaborating with the German authorities based on, for example, hearsay and unsubstantiated reports. There were also cases in which a diversionary unit was unable to gather the evidence required to execute a sentence – criminal reports often contained vague information on the suspect and their crimes, as well as reports made to underground organizations.

The Civil Special Court acting under the auspices of the Directorate of Civil Resistance for the Krakow district began to function in the first half of 1943. It maintained contact with the Special Military Court at the headquarters of the Home Army's Krakow district. Underground courts enforced the orders of the Directorate of Civil Resistance. Serious crimes against the vital interests of the nation, state and its citizens, requiring immediate punishment, fell under the jurisdiction of the Special Civil Courts. Functioning at the lowest level of the underground justice systems were the Civil Resistance Court Commissions.⁸⁸

The Special Civil Court operated in Krakow until October 1944.⁸⁹ According to official releases of the underground press, the Krakow district SCC pronounced 67 death sentences against those guilty of collaborating with Nazi security and administration institutions.⁹⁰ Officially, 34 of those sentences were carried out before the end of the occupation (according to information provided by the underground press). Among those convicted were 15 Krakow citizens (seven death penalties, five public condemnations, two reprimands). The others originated from such places as Brzesko, Trzebinia, Sokołów, Łańcut and Trzcina.⁹¹

Not all sentences were published in the underground newspapers; more were probably carried out in reality. For example, the "Żelbet" diversionary unit reported that between mid-1943 and July 1944, 29 people were executed (including two individuals

86 J. Proficz, *Hasło 'Jemioła'*.

87 OSTASZ, *Krakowska Okręgowa*, 162.

88 OSTASZ, *Krakowska Okręgowa*, 159–162.

89 OSTASZ, *Krakowska Okręgowa*, 159–162.

90 OSTASZ, *Krakowska Okręgowa*, 165.

91 Calculations made by the author based on underground press releases: *Biuletyn Informacji Małopolskiej*, no. 16–47 (1943–1944); *Wolność*, no. 46–57 (September–November 1943), where information on executions was published.

whose names remain unknown).⁹² Only two of those deaths were announced by the press.⁹³ The documents suggest that 63 Nazi collaborators were executed in the Krakow district. This may be a rough estimate, as only part of the file of the Krakow district of the ZWZ/AK has survived.

Some of the information regarding executions was actually false, and a number of individuals supposed to have been executed in fact escaped punishment: they left the city before they could be arrested. There is also the question of verdicts based merely on hearsay or the desire of the accuser for revenge. According to order no. 840/1 of the commander in chief of the Home Army of 11 August 1943, in the event that there was an immediate danger of Home Army soldiers being exposed, commanders were "entitled, as stated in the regulations, to eliminate the suspect on sight". In the fall of 1943, the civil courts adopted a more "tolerant attitude" as a consequence of the merciless response of the German authorities (10 Poles were executed for every one informer killed by the resistance). As a consequence, many collaborators escaped punishment, and only some of them were held accountable for their actions after the war. Accusations against informers and denouncers were especially difficult for post-war prosecutors to investigate, as they were as hard to prove after the liberation as they were during the war.

The post-war settling of scores

In the final year of the war, pursuant to the decree of 31 August 1944 "on the sentencing of Fascist-Nazi war criminals guilty of murder and torture of civilians and prisoners of war, as well as of traitors of the Polish Nation" the handling of cases involving war crimes became the primary concern of Polish DA offices of Special Criminal Courts, Administration Courts, District Courts and the Supreme National Tribunal.⁹⁴ By 22 July 1946, 8,838 indictments had been submitted to the Special Criminal Court; 4,593 cases were resolved; 306 people were sentenced to long-term imprisonment and 631 to death.⁹⁵ The Supreme National Tribunal was established on 21 January 1946; it continued to function until 1948. During that time, the tribunal convicted 40 war criminals; 20 of them were sentenced to death.

The archives of the Krakow branch of the Institute of National Remembrance show that 2,263 criminal cases were brought against defendants based on the above-mentioned decree of 31 August 1944.⁹⁶ According to the records of the Krakow Special Criminal Court, most of the cases cited above concerned denunciations and collaboration with the Nazi authorities during World War II. At this point in my research, I am unable to give an estimated number of post-war criminal cases concerning denunciation-

92 J. Proficz, *Hasło 'Jemioła'*. Calendar of operations of the "Żelbet" Group Guerilla Units by Stanisław Plucha, Kowary 1999 (manuscript in possession of the author). Details concerning sentences were presented by Piotr Szmigielski in his PhD dissertation entitled *Pododdział IIB/Żelbet – rodowód, działalność i struktura jednostki Armii Krajowej w obrębie Obwodu Kraków-Miasto Inspektoratu Krakowskiego*, Archiwum Pracy Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego [JU Theses Archive].

93 OSTASZ, *Krakowska Okręgowa*, 159–162.

94 Special Criminal Courts were initially set up by state authorities in Lublin, Warsaw (with temporary headquarters in Siedlce) and Krakow (with temporary headquarters in Rzeszów), and later on, in reinstated and newly created districts of the Courts of Appeals.

95 RZEPLIŃSKI, *Przystosowanie ustroju sądownictwa*, 16–21.

96 Data based on the inventory of criminal case files held in the archives of the Krakow branch of the Institute of National Remembrance.

related offenses *stricto sensu*; it requires a more in-depth study. It results, among other things, from the fact that indictments rarely mentioned those charges. It was qualified as treason or collaboration with the Nazis; more often than not, the fact that the defendant was a Nazi denouncer was not revealed until the criminal investigation. One of the examples is the case of Aniela S., Jan Ł., Mieczysław K. and Ludwik S., charged in 1945 with "acting to the detriment of Polish nationals". As it turned out during witness hearings, in the autumn of 1943, Mrs Tańcul denounced two female Jews, who had lived at her house with a child, to the village leader, Mr Łańcuszka. The latter reported that to the Polish police station in Trąbki. M. K. and L. S., based on the abovementioned reports, came to Przebieczany and shot three Jews, i.e. two Jewish women and a child, and seized their property.

The prosecutors were unable to find sufficient evidence to sentence them for their crimes. They were, instead, found guilty of participating in denouncing people assigned to forced labour in the Third Reich.⁹⁷

Terminology introduced by the August Decree, defining collaboration with the German authorities, covers also overt or anonymous informants of the Gestapo who reported Poles and Jews wanted by the secret police, revealing their location, intimidation of tenants by threatening to denounce them to the Nazis, and sometimes also ostentatious support for the Nazi policy (such as hanging Hitler's portrait on the walls, organizing meetings for Germans or using their protection). The post-war interpretation of the decree was rather general in nature and allowed punishment for various offenses. It mentioned numerous ways of acting to the detriment of the Polish state and its citizens, e.g. the reporting or arresting of wanted persons or those persecuted by the Nazis on grounds of their nationality, religion, race or for political reasons (which was all part of the denouncers' activity during the war), extortion, participation in the killing of civilians or prisoners of war, participation in organized crime or otherwise acting to the detriment of the Polish state, Polish legal entities, civilians, military personnel or prisoners of war. It was also mentioned that "acting or failure to act under threat or upon orders does not release the accused from criminal responsibility" (art. 5, par 1).

It was often hard to verify those accusations, not only due to the chaos that reigned at the time in the new, post-war reality, but also to other, more obvious reasons. Witnesses either died or left the country during the war or shortly afterwards, or it was impossible to locate them: they had in many cases gone into hiding for political reasons or had not returned from concentration camps. Others chose not to appear at hearings for fear of the revenge of those against whom they were supposed to testify. Old animosities were very much alive, and victims often lived close to their abusers or passed them on the streets of Krakow.⁹⁸ The atmosphere in the entire country, at the time, was that of widespread insecurity and mistrust, which was yet another obstacle preventing victims from bringing denouncers – their neighbours or relatives – to justice.

Investigations that the authorities succeeded in opening were launched on the basis of oral or written statements usually submitted personally to a Citizens' Militia station in the presence of a functionary; initial procedures were then put in motion, in accordance with protocols similar to those from the occupation period, including for the

⁹⁷ AIPN Kr, 07/490.

⁹⁸ OLCZAK-RONIKIER, *Wtedy. STĘPIEŃ, Miasto opowiedziane. STĘPIEŃ, Powroty krakowskich Żydów*, 255–266.

investigation proper and the court trial. Not every report led to criminal proceedings; sometimes proceedings were suspended during the verification stage. If a person decided to submit such a report after the war, they would usually chose the police station located closest to their place of residence – just as was the case during the occupation. The victims would testify against alleged informers, but then again so would people who, acting out revenge, made false accusations in their statements.⁹⁹ Thus, courts heard cases involving not only real informers, but also innocent people. Most cases concluded with acquittals, many of them, as I have already mentioned, being suspended during the investigation. It should also be mentioned that some cases were closed as the allegations had been deemed unfounded; some of the offense reports were based on conjecture, rumours or – quite often – desire for revenge, the settling of old scores or pure malice. Those cases had little in common with actual facts, and they became (similarly as during the occupation) a means to an end, such as the seizure of property, prospects of promotion at work etc.¹⁰⁰ As this particular research area is broad and complex, and requires a separate study, I shall present below only a few selected examples of cases that came to trial.

On 5 March 1945, the inhabitants of the tenement building at 4 Hetmańska Street wrote to the new, communist authorities of Krakow:

Mr. and Mrs. Konik, who, between 1941 and 1944, were the caretakers at our house, during that time harassed and blackmailed almost all the residents for no reason whatsoever, insulting them, and using the most offensive language. They were regular informers of the former "blue uniforms"; they frequented the police stations, reporting made-up "crimes", allegedly committed by the tenants.¹⁰¹

The court found them not guilty

Many other cases ended in acquittal or the prosecutors simply suspending proceedings. For example, the residents of Bawół Square were blackmailed by their neighbours, the P. family. In their trial after the war, several male and female caretakers from neighbouring houses testified as witnesses, describing in detail the meetings of the accused with the Gestapo. They were not convicted, as the court found the evidence lacking – the testimonies of the witnesses were deemed insufficient, even though they confirmed that these events had indeed taken place.

99 False reports of offenses not committed were supposed to be prosecuted as offenses against the course of justice consisting in reporting an offense to an authority responsible for instigating criminal proceedings in full awareness of the fact that the said offense was not committed. Those guilty of that crime were to be subject to adequate sanctions, in accordance with procedures similar to those from WWII. During the war, these offenses were punished, based on evidence gathered, with several months to a year in prison. After the war, as I have already mentioned, it was more difficult to gather information, witnesses were dead or feared revenge from those closest to them, or were impossible to locate. In the post-war chaos accompanying the creation of new legal and state structures, as well as numerous crimes (see: ZAREMBA, *Wielka trwoga.*), many cases and proceedings instigated by the prosecution were discontinued, the defendants being exonerated due to lack of evidence.

100 I am currently unable to give more accurate statistical data. I am still working on that problem as part of the aforementioned National Center for Science grant-funded research.

101 AIPN Kr, 502/120, Leon K. case file; he was accused of collaborating with the Gestapo and denouncing a Polish man to the Nazis who in turn later on arrested him.

In November 1945, a judge by the name of Bartynowski discontinued an investigation into a report made several months earlier by the caretaker of 5 Biskupia Street in Krakow in which he accused Irina Albon of threatening civilians that she would denounce them to the Gestapo. He also claimed that she extorted money and blackmailed the local community. An investigation showed that Albon, who was a Czech Jew, went into hiding in 1942 using false Aryan papers, and tenants' suspicions regarding her behaviour were due to mistrust and prejudice. They feared her because she kept to herself and met with strangers at different times of the day. She was a newcomer who kept her distance from her neighbours.¹⁰²

Conclusions

Collaboration with the Germans during World War II was both institutionalized and informal, forced and voluntary, and people who decided to become Nazi informers and, among other things, denounced their Jewish neighbours, their colleagues working for the resistance, or brothers-in-law they disliked and wanted out of the apartment, did so overtly or anonymously. They made oral statements at German or Polish police stations or wrote letters to the Gestapo. Sometimes they even used both channels, counting on a swifter response from the authorities. Those who were more desperate provided the date of their visit at the station or the time that had elapsed since their last letter ("I informed the police a week ago").¹⁰³ They emphasized the fact that it was their second or third report. Such a letter would begin, for example, with the heading: "To the Secret State Police in Krakow. This is letter no. 2".¹⁰⁴ One of the characteristic features of written statements was their matter-of-factness and the multiplicity of problems addressed in those letters. They often contained more than one accusation, such as illegal trading engaged in by a person of Jewish origin, or the crime of working for the resistance (for example, "he trades in coal without a permit, selling coal to Jews at prices bordering on usury"),¹⁰⁵ which shows the authors' determined efforts to have their enemies punished.

Very few of the informers and confidants were part of the criminal underworld before the war.¹⁰⁶ Collaborators were an entirely new category created by the occupation. Their actions were motivated mostly by the rapidly changing situation in the city, forcing them to adapt to the new totalitarian regime, which created many opportunities for the making of "easy money" or the finding of lucrative jobs, while at the same time allowing them to settle old scores or resolve new conflicts. In the first years of the occupation, informers primarily kept a lookout for any infringements of the law committed by their fellow citizens; less frequently they were asked to report on those in contact with the resistance or Jews concealing their identity. This changed in 1942 and 1943, when the top priority for agents became the exposing of members of the underground and Jews with illegal Aryan papers etc., as well as the people helping them.

Informers and denouncers were the most effective means by which the occupier could maintain control over society. They filled the "gaps" in police activities,

¹⁰² Contents of denunciations. Private collection of the author.

¹⁰³ Private collection of the author.

¹⁰⁴ Private collection of the author.

¹⁰⁵ Private collection of the author.

¹⁰⁶ See: ENGELKING – GRABOWSKI, *Żydów tajemnych prawo należy karać śmiercią!*. JARKOWSKA-NATKANIEC, *Criminal Cases*.

ensuring Krakow and its citizens were under complete and constant surveillance. As a consequence, the Nazi authorities were informed, on an ongoing basis, of the situation in the city. Caretakers monitored the behaviour of tenants, neighbours were suspicious of new residents – and after the war, they accused one another of being Nazi informers. Those who actually reported on them often wrote letters in German in an effort to remain anonymous.¹⁰⁷ They feared for their safety (and were afraid of collective responsibility), or – conversely – were trying to get attention. Stefania S., the author of one denunciation from 1943, provided her personal details in the letter, along with a note stating that “I, the undersigned, may testify under oath in a court of law”. Besides, as Wolfgang Sofsky wrote: “Informers and spies were smuggled into areas of possible activity that eluded surveillance – a second, secret, auxiliary band of traitors to keep tabs on the official agents”.¹⁰⁸

SS-Obersturmführer Kurt Heinrich August Dietrich Heinemeyer, an officer of the Krakow Gestapo, interrogated after the war by the prosecution of the Special Criminal Court in Krakow, testified that the number of denunciations received by the German authorities during the occupation was so high that they had been unable to verify all of them.¹⁰⁹ This is a rather general statement; however, considering the fact that even in September 1939, the Gestapo in Łódź received approximately 40 denunciations per day,¹¹⁰ it might have been true. Heinemeyer, who in 1940 was appointed head of the Krakow KdS and in 1943 head of Subdivision IV-A-1 responsible for combating Polish left-wing organizations, relied on his colleagues or subordinates for information. Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, a Jew using “Aryan papers”, who worked with a local resistance cell, claimed that “Krakow was less infested with denouncers and blackmailers than Warsaw was”.¹¹¹ Hochberg-Mariańska’s words also explain little. However, unlike Heinemeyer, she was part of a group that was in immediate danger of being denounced by informers – she was a Jew in hiding who worked with members of the Home Army, which did not begin trying to eradicate this vile practice until 1943, even though the underground press had officially condemned denouncers a year before.

The efforts of the Krakow resistance to combat Nazi collaborators were far from a resounding success. In the entire Krakow district, only 63 individuals were executed, and 15 individuals from the city were denounced in the public press, whereas almost 2000 agents were active in the district. It should be noted that not all the information provided on confidants and denouncers was credible – which probably explains the limited results of the resistance in this area; the overwhelming presence of the Germans in the city was also not without significance.

The German occupation of Krakow changed, and somewhat radically, the deeply entrenched social fabric of the city and the mentality of its inhabitants, violating many values; it deepened the divide between ethnic groups, heightened mistrust and stirred up latent anti-Semitism. Jews fell victim to post-war pogroms (particularly in Kielce and Krakow in 1945 and 1946) or were forced to leave the country.¹¹² Those who

107 Anonymous denunciations intercepted by the resistance. The author’s own private collection.

108 SOFSKY, *Ustrój terroru*, 213.

109 AIPN, sign. 502/2246, Kurt Heinemeyer criminal case file.

110 BORODZIEJ, *Terror i polityka*, 57.

111 HOCHBERG-MARIAŃSKA – MARIAŃSKI, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów*, 29.

112 These events were described by: STĘPIEŃ, *Miasto opowiedziane*. TOKARSKA-BAKIR, *Pod klątwą*. TOKARSKA-BAKIR, *Okrzyki pogromowe*. CICHÓPEK, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie*. KWIEK, *Wydarzenia antyżydowskie*, 77–89.

decided to stay in Krakow often had to pass their oppressors on the street. Only some of them reported their crimes to the Citizens' Militia; usually, they testified before local branches of Jewish Commissions. The two institutions cooperated, exchanging documentation.¹¹³ The same witnesses were interrogated repeatedly. Many members of the militia had also served in the criminal police or the Polish police. As a consequence, they were mistrusted, as many members of the Jewish community remembered their participation in the operations launched against them.

The courtroom became the perfect platform for resolving neighbourly or political conflicts – it gave the claimants an instrument to bring (real or alleged) collaborators to justice. In the years that followed, the new Communist regime used the August Decree to deal with its political enemies.

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¹¹³ Records of the SCC and the Social Court of the Central Committee of Polish Jews include the correspondence between the two institutions. In specific criminal cases, the testimonies of witnesses made before Jewish commissions or the prosecution were transferred from one institution to the other.

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